



Commonly Used Geographic Information Systems Acronym List

Acronym	Definition
3DEP	3D Elevation Program of the USGS
ACS	American Community Survey—an ongoing survey of the U.S. Census Bureau that collects a wide range of economic and demographic information.
APCO	Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials
APR	American Prairie Reserve
APRX	ArcGIS Pro project
ARCO	Atlantic Richfield Company—responsible party for Butte Superfund site.
BAA	Broad Agency Announcement—A method used by federal agencies to request proposals from outside entities for research and development
BAS	Boundary and Annexation Survey – U.S. Census Bureau program for updating information about the legal boundaries and names of all governments
BGN	Board on Geographic Names, U.S. Department of Interior
BIA	Bureau of Indian Affairs, U.S. Department of Interior
BLM	Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Department of Interior
BOR	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
CAD	Computer Aided Dispatch—a term for computer-enabled dispatching, most relevant to public safety
CAD	Computer Assisted (or Aided) Design (or Drafting)—a generic term for computerized drawings
CADD	Computer Assisted (or Aided) Design and Drafting
CadNSDI Montana	CadNSDI is a term used nationally to mean the spatial dataset representing the Public Land Survey System (PLSS). In Montana, this dataset is referred to as CadNSDI Montana.
CAMA	Computer Aided Mass Appraisal—MT DOR database storing parcel tax information
CDP	Census Designated Place—a U.S. Census Bureau designation for unincorporated concentrations of population
CIR	Color Infrared Imagery
CLDXF	Civic Location Data Exchange Format – NENA standard for the exchange of United States civic location address information
CSKT	Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes
DBF	Data Base File—the dBase file format used with shapefiles (see also SHP)
DEM	Digital Elevation Model—typically produced by USGS in 30- or 10-meter cell size
DEQ	Montana Department of Environmental Quality
DGN	Design file—the Microstation drawing format



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DLG	Digital Line Graph—a vector GIS format produced by USGS
DMA	Defense Mapping Agency
DMA	Montana Department of Military Affairs
DNRC	Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation
DOA	Montana Department of Administration
DOI	U.S. Department of Interior
DOQ	Digital Orthophoto Quadrangle—a quadrangle-based orthographic air photo from USGS typically 1-meter resolution delivered as 7.5-minute quad or 3.75-minute quarter-quad (DOQQ) images
DOR	Montana Department of Revenue
DRG	Digital Raster Graphic—a scanned image of a USGS 7.5-minute quad
DSM	Digital Surface Model—typically produced by USGS
DTM	Digital Terrain Model— a generic term for software terrain modeling
DU	Ducks Unlimited
DWG	Drawing file—the AutoCad drawing format
DXF	Drawing Exchange Format—an AutoCad export file
E00	An exchange format for ESRI coverage and grid datasets
EEAP	Esri Enterprise Advantage Program
EMCS	Esri Managed Cloud Services
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
EPS	Encapsulated Postscript file—a file format favored for graphics exchange
EQC	Environmental Quality Council (Montana Legislative Committee)
ESRI	Esri—leading GIS Software provider and state contractor (formerly known as Environmental Systems Research Institute)
ETL	Extract, Transform, Load—a process for moving data out of a database, changing the form of the data, and transferring the data to a new location
FGDC	Federal Geographic Data Committee
FIPS	Federal Information Processing Standards—public U.S. federal government standards for use in federal computer systems (i.e., census FIPS code)
FME	Feature Manipulation Engine—ETL software from Safe Software
FOIA	Freedom of Information Act
FWP	Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
GCDB	See CadNSDI. Geographic Coordinate Database (GCDB)—a now obsolete, measurement-based digital representation of the Public Land Survey System created by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, which served as a basis for CadNSDI Montana
GDB	ESRI file geodatabase



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GEE	Geo-Enabled Elections
GIF	Graphic Interchange Format—a format for web graphics
GIS	Geographic Information System or Geographic Information Science
GNA	Montana Geographic Names Advisor
GNIS	Geographic Names Information System—USGS database storing the official names of geographic places in the United States (see also MGNF)
GNSS	Global Navigation Satellite Systems—a system of satellites that provides location and time information to users. GPS is an example of a GNSS.
GPSC	Geospatial Product and Service Contracts—a suite of contracts used by federal, state, and municipal government entities to partner with the USGS for the purpose of fulfilling their geospatial data requirements
GPS	Global Positioning System—a GNSS operated by the U.S. Air Force that provides location, navigation, and time information to users
GWIC	Ground Water Information Center of the Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology
HTML	Hypertext Markup Language—a language used to build web pages
HUC	Hydrologic Unit Code (watershed identifier)—a series of HUCs representing nested watersheds are stored in a watershed boundary database. (see also WBD)
IfSAR	Interferometric Synthetic Aperture Radar. Airborne IfSAR is a remote sensing method using radar.
ITMC	Information Technology Managers Council—IT managers from Montana state agencies, universities, and local governments
ITSD	Information Technology Services Division of the Montana Department of Administration. Now SITSD.
JPEG (JPG)	Joint Photographic Experts Group—a format for web graphics
LAS	An LAS file is an industry standard for storing lidar data, specifically the point cloud.
Lidar	Light Detection and Ranging—a remotely-sensed digital product that is similar in principle to radar, using light instead of the microwave part of the radio-frequency spectrum (also written as LiDAR)
LPC	Lidar point cloud
LUCA	Local Update of Census Addresses Operation—a program of the U.S. Census Bureau to allow tribal, state, and local governments to review and comment on the Census Bureau's residential address list before the 2020 Census
MACD	Montana Association of Conservation Districts



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MACo	Montana Association of Counties—advocates on behalf of county governments and county commissioners in Montana
MAGIP	Montana Association of Geographic Information Professionals—One seat on the MAGIP board of directors is held by a representative of the Montana Land Information Advisory Council.
MARLS	Montana Association of Registered Land Surveyors
MBMG	Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology
MCC	Montana Conservation Corps
MCO	Montana Climate Office—an independent state-designated body operated by the University of Montana
MCPD	Montana Control Point Database
MDB	A type of ESRI “personal geodatabase,” stored in a Microsoft Access database. (Esri recommends the File Geodatabase)
MDF	Master Database File – Primary database file format used by Microsoft SQL Server
MDT	Montana Department of Transportation
MEDA	Montana Economic Developers Association
MGNF	Montana Geographic Names Framework—Montana’s database of geographic names (see also GNIS)
MLA	Montana Library Association
MLCT	Montana League of Cities and Towns
MLIA	Montana Land Information Act—passed by the 2005 Montana Legislature to provide source funding for GIS coordination and for MSDI data collection, integration, maintenance, and distribution
MLIAC	Montana Land Information Advisory Council
MRF	Meta Raster Format – a cloud optimized imagery data storage format
MRF	A file extension associated with GPS Pathfinder Office by Trimble Navigation Limited
MrSID	Multiresolution Seamless Image Database—an image format created by Lizard Tech that dramatically reduces the disk size of image files
MSDI	Montana Spatial Data Infrastructure (see also NSDI)
MSL	Montana State Library
MTNHP	Montana Natural Heritage Program (see also NHP)—a program of the Montana State Library's Natural Resource Information System that is operated by the University of Montana.
MWCC	Montana Watershed Coordination Council
MXD	Map Exchange Document—ArcMap map document
NAD	North American Datum



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NAD	National Address Database
NAIP	National Agriculture Imagery Program—an aerial imagery program operated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture
NED	National Elevation Dataset (USGS)
NENA	National Emergency Number Association – 9-1-1 research, standards development, training, education, outreach, and advocacy organization
NG9-1-1	Next Generation 9-1-1
NGA (Formerly NIMA)	National Geospatial-Information Agency (formerly National Imagery and Mapping Agency), U.S. Military
NGB	National Guard Bureau
NGS	National Geodetic Survey. Part of NOAA, the NGS defines, maintains, and provides access to the National Spatial Reference System.
NHD	National Hydrography Dataset (USGS)
NHP	Montana Natural Heritage Program (see also MTNHP)—a program of the Montana State Library's Natural Resource Information System that is operated by the University of Montana.
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce
NPS	National Park Service
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture
NRDP	Natural Resource Damage Program
NRIS	Natural Resource Information System—a program of the Montana State Library (see also NHP and WIS)
NSDI	National Spatial Data Infrastructure (see also MSDI)
NSGIC	National States Geographic Information Council
NSRS	National Spatial Reference System
NWF	National Wildlife Federation
NWI	National Wetlands Inventory
PAD	Property Assessment Division (of MT DOR)
PDF	Portable Document Format—an Adobe file format used for document publishing/sharing and is readable with free software (Acrobat Reader)
PLSS	Public Land Survey System (see also CadNSDI Montana)
PNG	Portable Network Graphic—a format for web graphics
PPLT	Prickly Pear Land Trust
PRISM	Parameter-elevation Regressions on Independent Slopes Model—a tool used for climate mapping



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PSAP	Participant Statistical Areas Program—a U.S. Census Bureau program that allows certain entities to review and update selected statistical area boundaries. Also a data layer.
PSAP	Public Safety Answering Point—a call center for receiving 9-1-1 calls (sometimes called "Public Safety Access Point")
RAWS	Remote Automated Weather Station
RDBMS	Relational Database Management System
REST	Representational State Transfer—a communication protocol (most often partnered with HTML) facilitating communication to and from web mapping services
RMEF	Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
RTF	Rich Text Format—a generic word processing format
RTN	Real-Time Network – a permanent network of reference stations providing GPS real-time corrections
SBN	Part of a shape file—one of the files that store the spatial index of the features (see also SHP)
SBX	Part of a shape file—one of the files that store the spatial index of the features (see also SHP)
SDE	Spatial Database Engine – commonly used as a reference to ESRI’s legacy ArcSDE software, which was a stand-alone set of tools used to create connections between ESRI desktop and server software and various RDBMS.
SDRP	School District Review Program – U.S. Census Bureau program for updating school district information, including boundaries
SDTS	Spatial Data Transfer Standard—the vector format USGS uses for DLG version 3
SHP	Shape file—an ESRI published spatial data format (comprised of multiple support files). (see also DBF, SBN, SBX, & SHX)
SHX	Part of a shape file—the file that stores the index of the feature geometry (see also DBF & SHP)
SID	An image format created by Lizard Tech that dramatically reduces the disk size of image files (see also MrSID)
SITSD	State Information Technology Services Division of the Montana Department of Administration (formerly ITSD)
SPCS	State Plane Coordinate System
SQL	Structured Query Language – standard language for storing, manipulating, and retrieving data in relational databases



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SSURGO	Soil Survey Geographic database—digital soils data produced and distributed by the Natural Resources Conservation Service
SWCDM	Soil & Water Conservation Districts of Montana
TIFD	Tax Increment Financing Districts
TIFF (also TIF)	Tag Image File Format—an image format commonly used in GIS
TIGER®	Topologically Integrated Geographic Encoding and Referencing—U.S. Census Bureau vector data format
TIN	Triangulated Irregular Network—a generic term for terrain modeling using triangles
TNC	The Nature Conservancy
URISA	Urban and Regional Information Systems Association—a national association of GIS professionals
USDA	U.S. Department of Agriculture
USDOT	U.S. Department of Transportation
USFS	U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Department of the Interior
USGS	U.S. Geologic Survey, U.S. Department of Interior
VTD	Voting District—a term used by the U.S. Census Bureau to refer to small polling areas created by state and local governments
WBD	Watershed Boundary Dataset (see also HUC)
WGA	Western Governors' Association
WIS	Water Information System of the Montana State Library—a part of NRIS
WPIC	Water Policy Interim Committee (Montana Legislative Committee)
XML	Extensible Markup Language—a language used for online applications and the internet